

Amendments to the Specification

Page 1, line 1, immediately below the title, insert the following paragraph:

This application is a Continuation application of Serial No. 10/026,828, filed December 27, 2001, which is a Divisional application of U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 09/319,777, filed June 11, 1999, now issued as U.S. Patent No. 6,350,587, which is a U.S. national stage of International Application No. PCT/GB97/03401, filed December 10, 1997.

Page 1, line 5, please rewrite as follows:

Background

Background of the Invention

1. Field of the Invention

The present invention is related to a mutant *Bacillus* strain and an antibolic screening method using the same.

2. Description of the Related Art

Page 2, line 8, please rewrite as follows:

Summary of the Invention

Page 3, lines 1-5, please rewrite the paragraph as follows:

In another ~~aspect~~ aspect, the present invention provides a method of determining whether an agent inhibits SpoOJ function in *Bacillus* species, which method comprises inducing the *Bacillus* strain as described to divide asymmetrically, as during sporulation, in the presence of the agent, and observing expression of the first and/or the second reporter gene.

Page 3, lines 6-11, please rewrite the paragraph as follows:

In another ~~aspect~~ aspect, the present invention provides a method which comprises inducing the *Bacillus* strain as described to sporulate in the presence of an agent, observing

expression of the first and/or second reporter gene and thereby determining that the agent inhibits SpoOJ function in the *Bacillus* species, and using the agent as an antibiotic to kill or inhibit the growth of bacteria.

Page 3, between lines 11-12, please insert the following:

Brief Description of the Drawing:

Figure 1 shows the effect of a SpoOJ mutation on expression of a σ^F - dependent reporter gene placed at different chromosomal locations in a spoIIIE background.

Description of the Preferred Embodiments

Page 3, lines 18-26, please rewrite the paragraph as follows:

In the method of the present invention, expression of the first and second reporter genes is preferably observed by monitoring changes in the levels of or the ratio of their products. ~~Preferably~~ Preferably, the first and second reporter genes are expressed as enzymes whose activities are observed by any convenient means e.g. fluorimetry or spectrophotometry. ~~Preferably~~ Preferably, the *Bacillus* strain is induced to sporulate and is contacted, just prior to asymmetric cell division, with the agent being investigated. The method can conveniently be performed as a screening test for putative antimicrobial agents.

Page 3, line 27 to page 4, line 3, please rewrite the paragraph as follows:

Any *Bacillus* species may be used that is capable of sporulating under suitable conditions and for which genetic constructions can be made. *B subtilis* is conveniently accessible and well characterised and thus is preferred.